

Visions of the Past: Bodie, Masonic, Aurora



Don Jackson

Terri Geissinger
September 15-16, 2007

**\$130 per person / \$115 for Mono Lake Committee members
enrollment limited to 15 participants**

The gold- and silver-mining towns of Bodie, Masonic, and Aurora offer visions of the past to those who visit these now-deserted outposts in the high desert. During this two-day seminar we will visit huge mills that once processed millions of dollars worth of gold and silver ore and peer through misty windows into the living rooms of the past.

At Bodie we will walk through both parts of town—the good and the bad, and stop by the cemetery for stories of those who never left Bodie. In Masonic we will see the lush meadows that were once farms that fed the town, stopping in Upper, Middle, and Lower Masonic for each area's history. After traveling the legendary Aurora cutoff route we will be treated to spectacular views and tales of the Aurora's lively history. Terri Geissinger is a Bodie State Historic Park Historian, Interpreter, and Guide. She is active in the Mono Basin Historical Society, and has a talent for making history come alive.

ITINERARY

Saturday, September 15 at 8:00 am: We will meet in Lee Vining at the Mono lake Committee Information Center & Bookstore. After brief introductions and discussion of the day's events, we

will head to Bodie via the old Bodie/Lundy Wagon Road. This historic route is now known as Cottonwood Canyon. Time will slip away as we tour the 108-year-old Standard Stamp Mill where millions of dollars in gold and silver was separated from the rock. With the equipment in place, this huge mill is impressive to say the least. As we stroll through town, you will hear personal stories of the citizens that once called Bodie home. This privileged tour will allow you to enter the Bodie Jail, which held notorious characters. If time permits, we will stop at the cemetery to visit the souls who remain.

Back in the rigs, we will head up Geiger Grade, which will lead us to Masonic. The drive includes spectacular views and possible antelope sightings. Masonic is located in a narrow valley rich with water, grass, trees, and gold. Don't forget your cameras!

We will return to the Mono Lake Committee Information Center by 4:30 pm.

Sunday, September 16 at 8:30 am: We will meet in the parking lot at Bodie. Our adventure to Aurora begins on the historic stage route that leads down Del Monte Canyon; not much has changed since the freight wagons and stages traveled this way. At Aurora we will see what remains of this late-1800s silver mining town—brick foundations, Samuel Clemens' former home, and a fascinating cemetery. When it is time to head back to modern civilization, we will continue on the historic stage route that will lead us to Hwy 182. Our day will conclude in Bridgeport at 4:00 pm.

Altitude & Dehydration Cautions; Field Conditions: These towns are all located at high altitude where the weather can change quickly. Please be prepared with a jacket, hat, sunscreen, comfortable shoes and plenty of water. Dehydration is a very common experience among visitors in the Eastern Sierra and it can exacerbate other physical conditions like altitude sickness. Both days of this tour will consist of hiking around sites with uneven terrain, but we will not venture far beyond our vehicles. Please be realistic about your physical limitations before embarking on this tour.

Four-Wheel Drive: Except for a few highway miles, we will be on dirt roads throughout this tour. Although these dirt roads are generally maintained by the county, we are recommending four wheel drive (4WD) and at least high clearance. The routes in the itinerary are subject to change due to weather and road conditions. If you don't have a 4WD or high clearance, don't despair. We will more than likely have a good number of participants who do.

MEALS

Pack a lunch and snacks for both days. Don't forget plenty of water!

TO BRING

- camera
- comfortable shoes
- jacket
- hat, sunscreen, sunglasses
- lunch and snacks for both days
- plenty of water!

RECOMMENDED BOOKS

Marguerite Sprague, *Bodie's Gold*
Frank Wedertz, *Bodie 1859-1900*
Robert Stewart, *Aurora Nevada's Ghost City of the Dawn*



Mono Lake Committee Field Seminars

P.O. Box 29 • Lee Vining, CA 93541 • (760) 647-6595 • www.monolake.org